

Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously presented) A diagnostic test for otitis media, comprising: using an ultrasound probe to detect the presence and measure the viscosity of middle ear effusion in a human patient; and comparing the measured viscosity of the middle ear effusion in the human patient with at least three predetermined values for effusion viscosity, wherein such comparison provides information regarding the likelihood of presence of bacterial infection in the middle ear effusion in the human patient.

8. (Previously presented) The diagnostic test of claim 7 wherein each of said predetermined values is based on a plurality of predetermined ranges of fluid viscosity measurements.

9-11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously presented) A method for determining if a human patient is a candidate for receiving antibiotic treatment, wherein the presence of middle ear effusion in the patient is detected by an ultrasound probe and the effusion viscosity is determined and compared with at least one predetermined fluid viscosity value.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently amended) ~~The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising,~~ An apparatus for determining ear fluid viscosity, the apparatus including:

a plurality of transducers, each adapted to transceive an ultrasonic signal to interact with a fluid-containing portion of the ear; and

means for using pulse echo amplitudes to determine whether the fluid in the ear is serous, purulent or mucoid.

15. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the plurality of transducers are arranged in a curved array.

16. (Currently amended) ~~The method of claim 4 further comprising,~~ A method of determining ear fluid viscosity, the method including:

operating a plurality of transducers such that each ~~transducers~~ transducer transceives an ultrasonic signal that interacts with a portion of an ear that contains fluid; and

using pulse echo amplitudes to determine whether the fluid in the ear is serous, purulent or mucoid.

17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the plurality of transducers are operated sequentially.

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the plurality of transducers are operated simultaneously.